

FACULTY OF LAW AND POLITICAL SCIENCE (FDSP)

HISTORY

The Faculty of Law and Political Science at the Saint Joseph University of Beirut combines the Faculty of Law and the Institute of Political Science.

The Faculty of Law

Founded in 1913 as the Law School through a partnership between the Saint Joseph University and the Lyon Association for the Development of Higher Education (representing *Université de Lyon*), the Faculty is deeply committed to an educational mission grounded in the intellectual and human values of the University. Lebanon's legal system, rooted in Greco-Roman traditions and shaped by the teachings of the "Ecumenical Masters" at Beirut's historic Law School, naturally integrates French legal principles. As the country's legal institutions developed independently, it became essential to teach Lebanese law as a distinct discipline. The Faculty adopted a bilingual approach: Arabic is used to convey key concepts of Islamic law, while French remains the language of Roman law foundations and legal research. To reflect the global evolution of law and its growing international dimension, English has also been incorporated into the program, ensuring graduates are prepared for both local practice and global legal contexts.

Bilingual education has long defined the Faculty, reflecting its national significance and close ties with French universities. With support from Lyon, the Faculty was authorized in 1920 to grant the French Bachelor of Law, followed by postgraduate degrees in 1924, and the PhD in Law in 1942. Simultaneously, the Faculty developed a national program in Arabic under Lebanese authorities, introducing Arabic courses in Islamic and administrative law in the 1920s, and officially establishing the Lebanese Bachelor of Law in 1940. To integrate both systems, a unified exam structure was introduced in 1965, allowing students to earn both Lebanese and French degrees. This dual-degree arrangement continued until 1979, when the Faculty retired the restructured French degree to focus entirely on the bilingual Lebanese law program.

The dual nature of the law degrees – the Lebanese state degree and the French state degree – initially improved the quality of legal education but also risked creating division in the programs. To address this, an exam system was introduced in 1965 and strengthened in 1973 with a single jury awarding both degrees. Under this system, Arabic exams were used for the French law degree, while French exams were used for the Lebanese law degree. This arrangement remained in place until the October 1979 session, when structural changes to the French law program led the Faculty to retire the French degree and focus exclusively on awarding bilingual Lebanese law degrees.

The teaching of law in Lebanon has long exerted professional, cultural, and political impacts. Despite the crisis that affected the development of higher education in the country, the Faculty, particularly its Law Department, maintained its prominent status. The Faculty of Law at the Saint Joseph University held a de facto monopoly on legal education in Lebanon until 1953. That year, this position faced challenges as growing demand emerged for legal instruction exclusively in Arabic for candidates who did not speak French and sought careers in the public sector or at the bar.

During this period, several new institutions expanded legal education in Lebanon, including the legal section of the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts, the Faculty of Law at the Arab University, and the Faculty of Law at the Lebanese University. Two decrees, each with different implications, changed the status of the Law Department at the Faculty. The 1958 decree integrated the Faculty of Law in Beirut into the Lebanese University, stipulating that the Faculty was responsible for teaching law as an integral part of the Lebanese University and fell under the Ministry of Education and Higher Education for all matters related to Lebanese law. The Higher Management Council operated under the patronage of the President of the Republic, with meetings presided over alternately by the Rector of the Lebanese University and the Rector of the Saint Joseph University.

The Faculty's position was further challenged during the events of 1958. To expand access to legal education for students who spoke only Arabic, the Lebanese University divided its Faculty of Law into two sections. The November 14, 1959 decree, later confirmed by the law of December 23, 1961, entrusted the Faculty with the second section. This section operated autonomously, emphasizing bilingual education and maintaining the Faculty's long-standing commitment to both Arabic and French instruction.

The Institute of Political Science

The Institute of Political Science has a straightforward yet significant history. It began in 1920 as a “preparatory course for administrative careers,” intended to enhance civil service training. In 1944, it was renamed the “Public Service Preparation Center,” and eventually evolved into the “Institute of Political Science,” offering a diploma. By 1959, this diploma was formalized into a Bachelor in Political Science from the Saint Joseph University.

The Department of Administrative and Political Science was initially created to succeed the Institute of Political Science within the Faculty of Law and Political Science. It consolidated programs leading to the Bachelor in Administrative and Political Sciences, the Master in Political Science, the Graduate Diploma in Political Science, and the PhD in Political Science.

In October 2002, the Department was reestablished as the Institute of Political Science. Fully integrated into the Faculty of Law and Political Science, the Institute operates with its administrative, scientific, and financial autonomy, under the supervision of USJ’s central administration and in coordination with the Faculty’s leadership. The Institute currently offers a Bachelor in Administrative and Political Sciences, a Master in Political Science, and a PhD in Political Science.

MISSION

In line with the Charter, values, social responsibility, and cultural heritage of the Saint Joseph University of Beirut, the Faculty of Law and Political Science is dedicated to delivering exceptional education that encourages students to achieve their fullest potential. It also plays a pivotal role in advancing legal scholarship through rigorous, innovative research.

At the Faculty, instruction emphasizes understanding law as both a precise technical system and a critical social, political, and economic framework, rather than merely memorizing rules for exams or courtroom recitals. Students are trained to analyze, interpret, debate, and evaluate legal issues, acquiring not only the practical skills required for the profession but also the critical judgment and broader perspective that characterize distinguished legal practitioners.

Cultivating critical thinking and advanced legal reasoning is core to this mission, equipping graduates to address the complex legal issues of our rapidly changing world. Similarly, the Institute of Political Science is committed to excellence by preparing proactive, dynamic leaders capable of making a meaningful impact across public and private sectors as well as civil society. Its programs and teaching practices are continuously updated to respond to evolving societal needs and professional demands.

ADMINISTRATION

Dean: Marie-Claude NAJM KOBEH

Vice Dean: Samia NASSAR ASMAR

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Administrative Coordinator for Academic Affairs: Salma Khoury NOUJAIM

Administrative Support Officer, Dean’s Office: Angela JAMATI

Communication Officer: Rana ABOU GHANTOUS MALEK

Secretary: Renée HAKIM GHOSN

FACULTY

Professors

Aida AZAR, Nagib HAGE-CHAHINE*, Paul Gérard HAGE-CHAHINE, Lara KARAM BOUSTANY, Walid KASSIR, Marie-Claude NAJM KOBEH*, Nada NASSAR CHAOUL, Etienne FARNOUX*, Hervé LECUYER*.

* Holder of the French Agrégation in Law

Associate Professors

Nadi ABI RACHED, Samer GHAMROUN, Patrick SOUMRANI, Youmna ZEIN HAYEK, Rizk ZGHEIB.

Assistant Professors

Sarah GHARIOUS, Diane KHAIR CHAMI, Youmna MAKHLOUF, Myriam MEHANNA, Georgette SALAMÉ.

Lecturers

Fady BECHARA, Samia NASSAR ASMAR, Alexandre SAKR.

Instructors

Charles ABDALLAH, Cheikh Mohamad ABOU ZEID, Rana AZOURY, Amine BARSA, Mélinda BOU AOUN ARAB, Hiba BRIDI, Rina CONSTANTINE, Karim DAHER, Yehya GHABBOURA, Khalil GHOSN, Marie-Antoinette GHOSTINE AIRUT, Mgr Elias HADDAD, Georges HADDAD, Krystel HAJJ, Shehrazade Yara HAJJAR, Adrian KALAANI, Wassim KALLAB, Melhem KHALAF, Ziad MEKANNA, Najib MESSIHI, Michelle MEZHER MANSOUR, Carole MOUDABER HADDAD, Alexa MOUKARZEL HECHAIMÉ, Samir MOUKHEIBER, Nadine NAJEM AOUAD, Mireille NAJM CHECRAZZAH, Jacques NOUN, Jihad RIZKALLAH, Hadi SALIBA, Joseph SAMAHA, Murielle SARROUF, Souraya SOLH, Aline TANIÉLIAN FADEL, Liwaa TARABAY, Karim TORBEY, Ray YAZBEK.

Non-tenured Professors

Roula (El) HUSSEINI BEGDACHE, Nathalie NAJJAR.

DEGREES, DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES AWARDED

Lebanese Bachelor of Law

Master of Laws, Concentrations: Private Law; Public Law; Business Law (LLM)

PhD in Law

University Diploma in Health Law and Bioethics

University Diploma in Civic Engagement and Citizen Initiative

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

- Legal: lawyer, judge, notary, legal advisor, corporate lawyer
- Diplomatic: diplomat, international organization official
- Academic: professor, researcher
- Administrative: civil service

TUITION FEES

Lebanese Bachelor of Law, Master of Laws, concentrations: Private Law, Public Law: 128 USD and 4 922 000 LBP (for semester 1), equivalent to 183 USD (exchange rate = 89,500 LBP)

Master of Laws, Concentration: Business Law (LLM): 154 USD and 5 907 000 LBP (for semester 1), equivalent to 220 USD (exchange rate = 89,500 LBP)

PhD in Law: 76 USD and 2 865 000 LBP (for semester 1), equivalent to 108 USD (exchange rate = 89,500 LBP)

SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OF THE INTERNAL REGULATIONS OF STUDY

I. Courses and Credits

Each program offered at the Faculty (Bachelor's, Master's, PhD) is assigned a specific number of credits. For example, the Lebanese Bachelor of Law, which spans four years, is awarded upon the successful validation of 240 credits.

The credits awarded for each course are determined based on the expected workload and learning outcomes for students. One credit is approximately equivalent to 25 hours of academic work.

Each academic year, students are required to validate 60 credits.

II. Semester System

The academic year consists of two semesters, each lasting fourteen weeks.

The duration of each course may not exceed the length of one semester.

III. Modules

The courses in the Bachelor's program are **grouped into modules**.

Each academic year consists of three modules: Module A, Module B, and Module C (A1, B1, C1 for the first year; A2, B2, C2 for the second year; A3, B3, C3 for the third year; and A4, B4, C4 for the fourth year).

In addition to these three modules, there is a Module D that includes elective courses, which may be distributed across the four years of study.

IV. Mandatory Attendance

Attendance at courses and supervised work sessions is mandatory. Students who are absent for more than 30% of the scheduled courses or supervised work sessions in a semester, without a valid and approved reason, will not be allowed to take the final exam for that course. This rule applies to final exams held in January for the first semester and in June for the second semester. Additionally, students exceeding the permitted absence threshold will not be authorized to take the second session of the exam for the same course.

Students re-registered in a course from the previous academic year, after failing to validate the required credits, are exempt from this attendance obligation, provided they have previously attended the sessions for that course. However, attendance at supervised work sessions remains strictly mandatory, including for students repeating the course.

V. Validation of the Program Learning Outcomes

- a. The assessment of learning outcomes consists of written and oral exams.
- b. For courses including supervised work (primarily, but not exclusively, those in Module A), the final grade is composed equally of the ongoing assessment score, based on supervised work, and the score of the final exam.
- c. Exams are graded on a 20-point scale. The weighting coefficient for each course is determined based on the number of credits allocated to it.

VI. Exam Sessions

- a. An exam session is held at the end of each semester (January for the first semester; June for the second semester).
- b. A second session is held in August-September. Students may re-take exams for failed courses in previous sessions of the same academic year.
- c. For all courses with supervised work in Modules A, B, and C, the ongoing assessment grade will be excluded during the second session to enhance students' chances of passing, in accordance with the Faculty Board decision of October 27, 2022.
- d. Any absence from an exam results in the failure to validate the corresponding course, regardless of the reason for the absence. No rescheduled exams will be provided to compensate for such absences.

VII. Validation and Allocation of Credits

Students validate courses by one of the following methods:

- a. By obtaining a grade of 10/20 or higher in the course.
- b. Through compensation, when the overall average for the module, which includes the course, is 10/20 or higher, subject to the following conditions:
 - Compensation applies across all courses within the module. The overall average of 10/20 is calculated by considering the grades for all courses within the module. Compensation is only applicable after the June exam session and, where relevant, the second session.
 - A grade of 5/20 or below in any course is disqualifying and cannot be compensated, even if the overall module average is 10/20 or higher. Students must retake the exam for any invalidated course.
 - Students forfeit the right to compensation within a module if they fail to attend any of the exams for courses within that module.

VIII. Student Progression/Prerequisites

Students may only register for module A of the subsequent year if they have successfully validated module A of the previous year, with an overall average of 10/20 or higher in that module. For example, module A1 serves as a **prerequisite for validation** in module A2.

- a. In accordance with Article 12(2) of Decree No. 14729 of June 20, 2005, and Article 27(d) of the USJ Internal Regulations of Study, students who fail a course must validate it in the following academic year. Failure to do so will result in the inability to re-register, unless granted special authorization by the academic jury. For example, if students fail to pass "Constitutional Law I" in 2022-2023 and do not pass it in 2023-2024, they will

not be allowed to re-register in 2024-2025.

b. Registration for modules B2 and C2 requires students to have validated the courses in modules B1 and C1. Thus, modules B1 and C1 are **prerequisites for attendance** in modules B2 and C2.

c. Registration for modules B3 and C3 requires students to have validated the courses of modules B2 and C2, and passed the courses of modules B1 and C1. Similarly, registration in modules B4 and C4 requires successful validation of the courses of modules B3 and C3, as well as modules B2 and C2.

d. Some courses are divided into two parts (I and II). For these courses, students may only register for part II if they have validated the courses in part I.

e. Registration for the courses listed below requires, in addition to the prerequisites outlined in paragraphs a and b of this section, the fulfillment of additional prerequisites (for either validation or attendance, as applicable):

Course	Prerequisite
Administrative Law (module C3)	General Administrative Law (module A2)
Criminology and Penitentiary Sciences (module C3)	General Criminal Law (module C2)
Special Criminal Law (module B4)	General Criminal Law (module C2)
Enforcement Procedures (module B3)	Private Judicial Law (module B2)

IX. Fraud and Attempted Fraud

Any verified fraud or an attempt thereof during an exam, will result in the immediate cancellation of the exam by the Dean and a score of zero, and no make-up session will be permitted to rectify the grade. It may even lead to referral to the Institution's Disciplinary Board in accordance with university regulations.